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Boundary file

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FILE DESIGNATION

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A-53

HANDLING INDICATOR

NO.

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO : SAN JOSE
 E.O. 11652: N/A
 TAGS : PN, PQ, CS, ETRD, PFOR, SNAR

FROM : Amembassy Panama

DATE: March 28, 1975

SUBJECT : Panama and Costa Rica Sign Agreements on Border Problems

REF :

SUMMARY

Ministerial level delegations of the Governments of Panama and Costa Rica arrived at an agreement which is intended to expand cooperation along the Panamanian-Costa Rican border in the fields of narcotics and contraband control, tourism, communications, quarantine, and security. The agreement was reached during a one-day meeting held March 14 at the Panamanian border community of Paso Canoas. Support for the Panamanian campaign for effective sovereignty over the Canal Zone was pledged by the Ministers of Government of both countries. END SUMMARY

Border Agreements Reached by Large Panamanian-Costa Rican Delegations

According to newspaper reports, the meeting of March 14 grew out of conversations between Lt.Col. Manuel Antonio Noriega, National Guard G-2 intelligence and security chief and Costa Rican police officials. Other officials were added to the delegations to cover the broad range of subjects.

A 22-point agreement was signed at the meeting. It affirmed and modified an agreement of June 14, 1972. Most of the provisions were purely exhortatory in nature; to establish measures for stopping the traffic in drugs, arms and undesirable people (#7), to coordinate the exchange of drug traffic information (#10), to establish greater control over the landing fields in the border area (#6), to

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273

DCM:REGonzalez

Clearances:

POL:JDBlacken(substance)

DEA:MBedolla

CONFS:PLangford

MILGP:Maj.Folster

SY:BHughes

SA:JKiyonaga

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maintain close cooperation and coordination in the border area (#4), etc. A few announced concrete agreements; to raise the uncontrolled, duty-free limit for purchases for home use by residents of the border from \$15 to \$20 (#1), beginning April 1 to maintain immigration offices open for tourist processing 24 hours per day (#2), to establish land marks delineating the border in the Burica Peninsula (#20), and for the Costa Rican Government to call a new meeting within three months for the evaluation of progress (#22). Practical measures to implement these agreements must be worked out before the next meeting of the full delegations.

The agreement was signed by the heads of the two delegations, Minister of Government and Justice Ricardo A. Rodriguez for Panama and Costa Rican Minister of Security Mario Charpentier. Also signing were Costa Rican Minister of Government Edgar Arroyo, Panamanian Minister of Treasury and Finance Miguel A. Sanchiz, Costa Rican Minister of Finance Porfirio Moreno, Costa Rican Minister of Agriculture Hernan Garron Salazar, Lt.Col. Noriega, and the attorneys general of both countries. Advisers on the Panamanian side included the directors of the offices of Emigration, Customs Communications, Social Communications and Civil Aviation.

Panama Makes and Obtains Statements on Canal Issue

LA ESTRELLA reported March 15 that Minister Rodriguez of Panama had thanked the Costa Rican delegation on behalf of GOP Chief of Government, General Omar Torrijos Herrera, saying: "No Panamanian can in these moments forget the important participation which Costa Rica has taken at the Security Council level and at the level of the United Nations General Assembly, ...of the Organization of American States, ...of UNESCO, ...of all the international organizations, in support, in defense of our legitimate rights in the Canal Zone." Costa Rican Minister Arroyo replied in part that "Panama's right...is one which has an echo in Costa Rica. We are absolutely convinced of the justice of this fight, and...in Costa Rica we stand beside Panama in this fight for the recovery of its sovereignty."

Rumors of Postponement of Meeting Turned out False

An alleged plot against the Government of President Daniel Oduber of Costa Rica was headlined in Government-controlled EL PANAMA AMERICA on March 9. The prediction made in the story that the border meeting between the security authorities of the two countries would have to be postponed, however, turned out to be false.

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COMMENTS: The lack of close cooperation between the border officials of the two countries has meant long delays (up to 2 hours) for tourists at times, fears that past measures to control the traffic in drugs and contraband were inadequate and a general feeling that the time had come to take all the many aspects of the border situation under study at one time by senior officials who have sufficient authority with which to make binding decisions. The practical results of this latest effort will not be known probably until after the next high level meeting which has now been called for. In between meetings officials will attempt to implement the generalized commitments which were made March 14. According to EL PANAMA AMERICA of March 16 a real factor in the decision to expand border cooperation was a shift, as the paper sees it, in the location of the regional center for narcotics from Panama to Costa Rica. We think such a finding premature at best.

JORDEN 

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